

2022 Professional Singles Report

By Philip Stockton



Following no play in 2020, and a U.S. only based draw in 2021, this year fifteen court tennis professionals including the top 8 players in the world came back to Newport RI to play for The Schochet Cup.

Play began on Monday June 6th, giving the pros trickling in from the U.S. Open a weekend to dial in their play on the ox-blood floor from 1880, now the oldest in the country.

Those curious enough to wander passed the lawn tennis courts of the Tennis Hall of Fame and into the shingled National Tennis Club, could see the game played at its highest level for a week in June.



Former World Champion and 5x Pro-Singles winner Wayne Davies took a boat from Nantucket to serve as the tournament director for the week. After a twenty-year hiatus, it was a privilege for the NTC to have Wayne back around the game.

The Satellite Draw

The satellite draw kicked off at Noon, serving as both a qualifier and proving ground for the unseeded players in the Schochet.

Highlights of the early rounds included Tony Hollins shooting out to a 5-4 first and 5-3 second set lead vs. Tim Chisholm, though he was edged out each time by Tim's high serve, volley return of serve, and targets when they mattered. (Tim ultimately would retire on match point vs. Lewis Williams in the Semi). In Match 2, Lewis Williams' ability to create space on every shot, and near perfect tambour defense, gave him steady momentum towards a 6-1, 6-4 win vs. Woods-Casey.

The final of the satellite was a showdown between Lewis Williams and Leon Smart. A close first set fell in Leon's favor. Leon's giraffe (which had a paralyzing effect at the U.S. Open in Tuxedo) returned. The serve pushed Lewis further into the back wall and created slower returns, setting Leon up for brutal shots under the grille and around the tambour. Lewis hung in late into the second, but ultimately Leon took it 6/5, 6/4.



Leon Smart (Winner) and Lewis Williams (Finalist) 2022 US. Pro Singles Satellite

The Main Draw

The main draw saw the return of three players who have respectively controlled the trophy for the Schochet Cup over the past twenty years: Chisholm (2002) Fahey (2001, 2003-2009) and Riviere (2010-2021).

Highlights in the early rounds included Brynn Sayers vs Lewis Williams. Brynn possesses a deadly two-handed cross back-hand that would consistently pressure Lewis in the corners and grille. While Lewis was able to retrieve unthinkable shots, it allowed Bryn to continually calibrate during rallies and ultimately, end points. Brynn stayed on the warpath, winning 6/1, 6/2, 6/3.

Lumley back on U.S. soil dropped two games in just under an hour at 6/1, 6/1, 6/0 vs. Greenley.

Before the third match of the evening, the competitors stood on the NTC court for a player photo with presenting sponsor Northfield's cocktail party running above in the upper gallery. It was an inspiring sight to find three former and current world champions on court (Davies, Riviere, Fahey) looking towards the back half of the tournament.



Left to Right: John Woods-Casey (Melbourne), Lewis Williams (Leamington), Rob Fahey (Oratory), Tim Chisholm (Tuxedo), Chris Chapman (Melbourne), Bryn Sayers (Queens), Ben Taylor Mathews (Leamington), Camden Riviere (Aiken), Leon Smart (Tuxedo), John Lumley (Philadelphia), Nick Howell (Bordeaux), Steve Virgona (Chicago), Josh Smith (Holypport), Wayne Davies (Westmoor)

The evening concluded with Chisholm vs. Chapman, which saw some wonderful rallies and target hitting. Chisholm 13 Dedans; and Chapman 8 Grilles. Riviere vs. Woods-Casey saw a dialed-in and relaxed Cam begin his campaign towards a 12th Schochet Cup.

From there the players and tournament sponsors walked down the hill and over Thames Street, where Dan diBartolomeo generously hosted drinks and dinner at 41 North.

Thursday's Quarterfinals were all but straight set affairs. Rob Fahey unveiled a behind the back Dedans defense vs. Virgona without losing an arm, which had casually nicked the back wall on the return.



Exhibit A: Rob's casual behind the back Dedans defense.

Chapman was able to push a 4th set vs. Ben Taylor Mathews, and appeared poised to push a 5th with a beautiful half volley at 4-4 in the 4th, but Ben's steady floor game and camera-smashing force playing off half a yard took the momentum back at 5/4, ultimately winning 6/3, 6/2, 3/6.



Friday's 1st semi-final was a war between Fahey and Ben Taylor Mathews.

The 2nd semi-final saw the matchup of the 2021 Schochet final: Riviere vs. Lumley. At points the volley exchanges and angles resembled a pinball machine on full tilt. Cam's uncanny ability to carve any shot out of the corners created the moments he needed to hit targets and set up the final.

The Saturday final was impressive on many levels. Rob, the current world champion approaching 54 years of age, is seeing his second major final in a row, coming off the U.S. Open. The former world champion and current challenger, Cam, is clearly at the peak of his game, and making it look easy. Cam won in straight sets, securing his 12th Schochet Cup in a row... One could not help but get excited for the world championships at Prested Hall in September.



L to R : Tennis Hall of Fame CEO Todd Martin, Camden Riviere, Wayne Davies

Congratulations to all the players, many thanks to our presenting sponsors: Northfield, the USCTA, The United States Court Tennis Preservation Foundation, Schochet Family, Tennis Hall of Fame, and to all our individual sponsors from the NTC. Special thanks go to Ryan Carey for streaming every match, our Tournament Director Wayne Davies and Jake Faulise at the NTC. Our best to Mike Gooding and his family. Looking forward to more court tennis at the Tennis Hall of Fame.

-Philip Stockton